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INFO RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI PRIORITY 8726  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY 4008  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY 3015  
RHMFIISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY  
RHMFIISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

S E C R E T ADDIS ABABA 001512

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FOR AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY JENDAYI FRAZER FROM AMBASSADOR  
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/18/2017

TAGS: PREL EAID KPKO ET SO

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: PRIME MINISTER RELUCTANTLY SEEKS  
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, OR SOMALIA MISSION CLOSES

REF: ADDIS ABABA 1500

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY. Prime Minister Meles met Ambassador to request reluctantly financial assistance to help the Ethiopians train the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia's (TFG) troops and police, as well as build capacity and infrastructure. The Prime Minister said the budget is extremely bleak, with the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) borrowing from the next fiscal year's budget to continue operations in Somalia in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the TFG in order to avoid a security and power vacuum. He was making this request specifically and only from the United States. END SUMMARY.

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THE BANK IS BROKE  
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¶2. (S/NF) Prime Minister Meles met Ambassador May 18 to request, with great reluctance, possible financial assistance from the U.S. He noted that Ethiopia's original plan for military intervention in Somalia was a very short operation. But the collapse of the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) and the opportunity to establish a stable, secular government forced Ethiopia to adjust its mission and support the TFG as well as AMISOM operations. The Prime Minister fully understands that his troops cannot leave Somalia without creating a security and power vacuum as well as undoing the successes achieved thus far. ENDF troops will not be able to leave until Burundian troops have taken their position and are able to operate effectively.

¶3. (S/NF) The cost, however, has drained the budget for this fiscal year. The ENDF, in particular, has had to borrow money from the following fiscal year budget, which begins July 7. This means that the ENDF will not be able to procure any new equipment or engage in any major training program for the ENDF in the next fiscal year. What has been a drain on the budget has been the need to use foreign exchange to meet daily needs in Somalia. To ease the cost, the ENDF is shipping rations, fuel, and other supplies to the troops, but the ENDF still needs to use cash to purchase supplies and other items used.

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ASSISTANCE FOR THE TFG  
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¶4. (S/NF) The Prime Minister said it was his policy not to request any assistance, but the bleak budget outlook and the burden on Ethiopia to support the TFG and continue operations in Somalia, has forced him to make a request for assistance. He fully realizes that assistance cannot be made for Somalia operations, but he expressed his hope that the U.S. could help with training for the TFG. The Ethiopians have been engaged in training TFG troops. But now the training is even more critical. In the next three months, Ethiopia wants to train an integrated brigade of various clans to help enhance security for the TFG. Additional training for the TFG includes a viable police force, as well as customs and sanitation services and other services to support a functioning government.

¶5. (S/NF) For the immediate term, the Prime Minister sees the training of an integrated TFG force, to serve as the backbone for the security of the TFG, as the highest priority. The training will take 3 months. Any amount of assistance will be helpful to meet this critical need.

¶6. (S/NF) COMMENT. Post strongly urges a positive response to the Prime Minister's request for training assistance for the TFG. ENDF forces have been supportive in meeting requests by the African Union and by us for force protection at Mogadishu's airport and seaport, and support for AMISOM troops and the TFG. The Prime Minister understands clearly the call by the African Union and us to remain until more AMISOM troops arrive, in order to avoid a security and power vacuum. Ethiopia's continued commitment to our shared counterterrorism objectives underscores Ethiopia's strong support for the U.S. END COMMENT.

YAMAMOTO